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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CHINA'S NATIONAL DEFENSE WHITE PAPER

A) "Face Directly the War Threats Toward Taiwan Imposed by China's `National Defense White Paper'"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" editorialized (12/29):

"The situation that the [national defense] white paper and the anti-secession law came out together fully demonstrates the concern of the Chinese authorities toward the direction of Taiwan. Hence, even if China cannot resist the trend and the will of people in Taiwan to seek independence and autonomy, China still intends to step up the threats and the bluffing to effortlessly confront popular opinion in Taiwan.

"In sum, one sentence for the 30-thousand-word white paper is that its purpose is pointed at Taiwan. China has been trying to devour Taiwan more and more each day, and China does not hide its intention to use force against Taiwan. Under such a serious threat, Taiwan should establish enough defense capabilities as its first priority. Hence, objectively considering the situation in the evolving international environment, Taiwan should grasp the precious chance when the United States is willing to sell such advanced weapons, such as submarines, anti-submarine planes, and the Patriot missiles to Taiwan. ."

B) "Chen Must Change His Route to Avert a Beijing Invasion"

The conservative, pro-unification "China Post" editorialized (12/29):

"It's about time that President Chen Shui-bian made a choice between continuously pursuing independence and averting a conflict with mainland China. Should he decided to choose the former, Taiwan will eventually have to fight a communist invasion on its own without aid from its U.S. ally.

"The challenge now facing Chen is that he must revise his independence route by moving toward the political center. Failing to do so, he is certain to risk waging a devastating war with China without the United States coming to bail Taiwan out."

PAAL